

Amendments to the Claims

Please amend claims 1, 4, 18 and 20 so that the current status of all claims is as follows:

1. (currently amended) A hierarchical system for routing outbound telephone calls between call-handling stations, the hierarchical system comprising:
  - a dialer configured to [place a telephone call] dial an outbound telephone call;
  - a first and a second hunt group in electrical communication with the dialer and arranged to route the outbound telephone call placed by the dialer ~~upon receiving a call routing signal~~; [and]
  - a first and second call-handling station, the first call-handling station being in electrical connection with the first hunt group and being in one hierarchical level, the second call-handling station being in electrical connection with the second hunt group and being in another hierarchical level, wherein at least one of the first or second call-handling stations is located at a site remote from the dialer; and wherein an operator staffing the first call-handling station in the first hunt group determines whether a right-party contact is available to talk on the outbound telephone call and transfer the call to the second hunt group when the right-party contact is available.
2. (original) A system for routing telephone calls between call-handling stations according to claim 1, wherein the dialer, a database, and the first and second hunt groups are a unitary unit.
3. (original) A system for routing telephone calls between call-handling stations according to claim 1, wherein the telephone call is automatically routed to both the first and second hunt groups.
4. (currently amended) A system for routing telephone calls between call-handling stations according to claim 1, wherein the dialer and the first and second hunt groups may be remotely located from the first and ~~second-level~~ second call-handling station.

5. (original) A system for routing telephone calls between call-handling stations according to claim 4, wherein the remote location is connected via a media.
6. (original) A system for routing telephone calls between call-handling stations according to claim 1, further comprising a server, a router and a multiplexor for providing voice and data transfer.
- 7-17. (cancelled)
18. (currently amended) A method for routing telephone calls between hunt groups, the method comprising:
- routing outbound call information to a first hunt group;
  - ~~generating a routing signal;~~
  - determining whether a right-party contact is available to talk on the outbound call while the outbound call is routed to a call-handling station within a first group of call-handling stations;
  - automatically routing the outbound call information to a second hunt group ~~in response to the routing signal~~ when the right-party contact is available.
19. (original) A method for routing telephone calls between hunt groups according to claim 20, wherein the telephone call is automatically routed to both the first and second hunt groups.
20. (currently amended) A method for routing telephone calls between hunt groups according to claim 20, wherein the routing to both the first and second hunt groups further comprises the second hunt group routing the call information upon receiving [the] a call routing signal.
21. (original) A method for routing telephone calls between hunt groups according to claim 20, wherein the routing further comprises differentiating between the first and second hunt group locations.
22. (original) A method for routing telephone calls between hunt groups according to claim 21, wherein the different locations are connected via a media.